

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 12, 2002

The Honorable James T. Walsh
Chairman, VA-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee
H-143 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:


Recognizing the tight budget constraints within which the Subcommittee must operate, we are writing in support of full funding for the Administration's request for the Senior Service Initiative within the Corporation for National and Community Service's fiscal year 2003 AmeriCorps budget request.

Older Americans can now count on unprecedented longevity—a growth of thirty years in the average American lifespan since 1900 (from 47 to 77 years). Demographers predict further gains in the years ahead. Health and well-being have skyrocketed among this population, and the economic and social circumstances of older Americans have dramatically improved. At the same time, high school and college graduation rates are four times what they were for the older population of the previous generation. These tremendous gains in longevity, health, vitality, independence, economic status, and education have created an entirely new lifestage between midlife and the frailties of advanced old age that will be a time of taking on new challenges, making significant contributions, and continuing to learn and grow.

Currently, there is a desperate shortage in our communities of individuals who provide significant service in areas such as education, childcare, human services, conservation, and elder care. Older Americans constitute an enormous and growing human resource for some of the country's most urgent areas of need. While AmeriCorps to date has been a national youth service program, the program holds the potential to be a much more robust vehicle that involves Americans across the lifespan in service. A revitalized AmeriCorps would emphasize those two groups who have the time to make a substantial commitment: young people and older adults.

The Administration's budget seeks an additional \$30 million to increase AmeriCorps participation to recruit and deploy older adults. This funding would provide the necessary investment to expand service options for the current and coming generation of older Americans. We respectfully request that you provide this funding in fiscal year 2003 so that a new generation of older adults will be able to translate their experience, talent, and good will into service that makes a real difference.

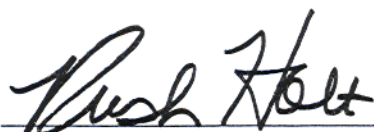
Cordially,



TOM LANTOS
Member of Congress

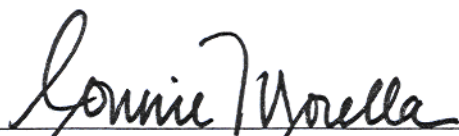


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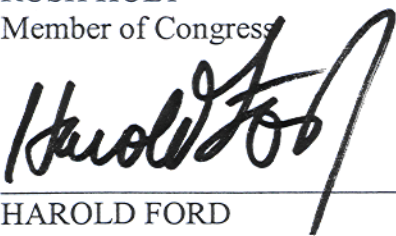
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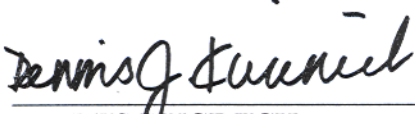
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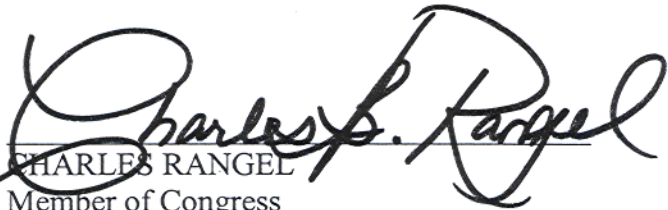
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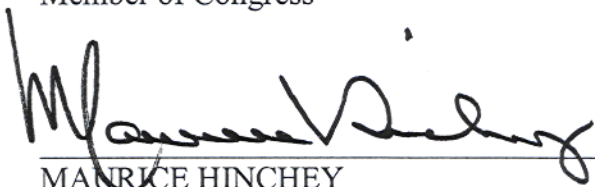
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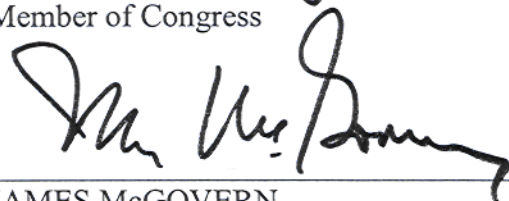
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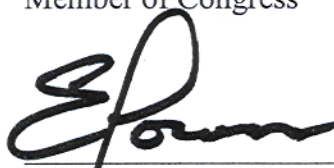
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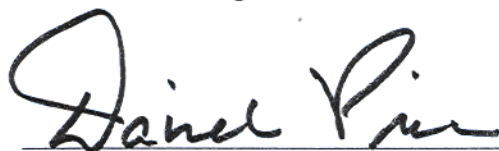
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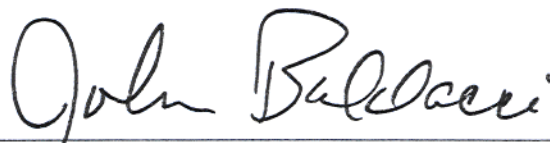
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JOHN BALDACCI

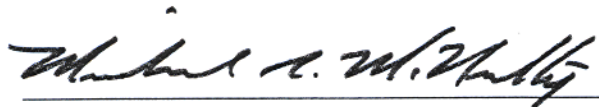
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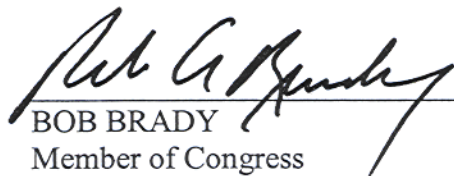
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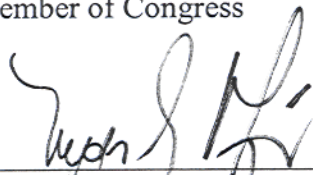
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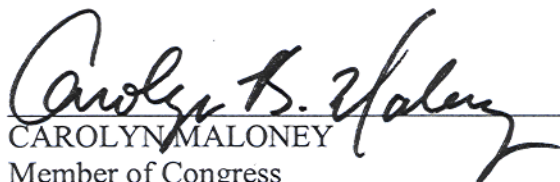
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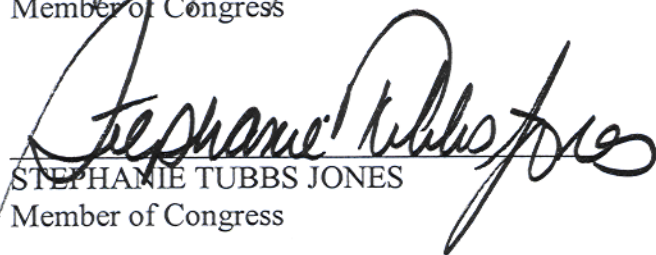
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